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ABSTRACT

In his autobiography, Mark Monroe relates his life experiences as a Lakota Sioux Indian in White America. The book begins with Monroe reminiscing about his happy childhood on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. In 1941 his family moved to Alliance, Nebraska, and his father Dakota. In 1941 his family moved to Alliance, Nebraska, and his father got a job picking potatoes on a farm. It was here that Monroe felt the first sting of White America's racism from signs outside local businesses that read "No Indians or dogs allowed." For many years, his family lived in poverty. When he became of age, Monroe enlisted in the military, and for the first time in his life he experienced acceptance and respect. Upon his return to the United States, he worked as a baker. During this same time, Monroe fell into a life of alcoholism, begun years earlier with social drinking. Eventually, he became physically ill and was unable to keep his job. Following rehabilitation, he ran for Police Magistrate and was the first Indian to have filed for public office in Alliance. Though he lost the election, he gained community support and a growing sense of dignity from the campaign. From his own experience, Monroe became aware of the cultural differences between Indian alcoholism and White alcoholism. This understanding led to his work with Indian alcoholics at the Panhandle Mental Health Center in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Since his recovery, Monroe has been an active participant in his community and continues to fight for the legal rights of American Indians. In 1973, he founded the American Indian Council, an organization that offers a variety of health, educational, and social programs, including a nutrition program, a hospital busing program, GED classes, job training and placement services, and alcohol counseling. (LP)